

# Comprehensive plan helps Franklin Park officials look to the future

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Officials from [Franklin Park](#) and the [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#) will present a comprehensive plan for the village to residents April 27 at the Franklin Park Police Station, 9451 West Belmont Ave.

The 100-plus-page document spells out a vision for Franklin Park's future and identifies strategies for achieving long-term goals. The meeting will give community members an opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions and is the latest step in a years-long process to draft a holistic development plan for the village.

"We're thinking through this process. It is not just dreams but things that can actually happen," John Schneider, Franklin Park's Director of Community Development, said April 21. "This is a good tool for us."

The document emphasizes continued infrastructure development, including street surfaces, bike lanes and sewers. The document calls a local bike network a "key objective." There are also recommendations for streamlining village zoning ordinances and improving intergovernmental and interagency collaboration.

"The village cannot be the sole implementer of plan recommendations," the document reads. "Therefore, collaborating and communicating with regional and state agencies, not-for-profit groups, other municipalities and private-sector organizations is integral to implementation."

John Carlisle, a CMAP project manager, concurred and mentioned that CMAP can help Franklin Park navigate those complex relationships and secure permission for projects that require outside authorization.

"That is always true in local planning," Carlisle said, referring to securing approval from outside agencies and governments, like the [Illinois Department of Transportation](#). "That is one headwind to doing local planning efforts. We have relationships with those agencies."

Franklin Park is one of dozens of communities participating in CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program. If a community is accepted, the program, first started in 2010 and funded by several federal and state agencies, offers towns a low-cost way to plan for future projects.

[Celebrating Earth Day in Franklin Park](#)

Franklin Park's previous comprehensive plan is more than a decade old, Schneider said. For this new plan, Schneider said village officials challenged CMAP to produce a document that goes beyond planning and is really an "implementation vehicle."

Carlisle, the CMAP planner, said he has been satisfied with the community's involvement so far.

The project first began in 2015 and the process has included public meetings and focus groups with seniors, high school students and local businesses. Franklin Park, Carlisle said, has several distinct advantages, including its geographic location, local industries and closeness to transportation hubs.

"The community has a lot of pride, actually, in a small-town feel while being right next to a big city and a world-class airport," Carlisle said. "They want to figure out how to leverage all that."

But Carlisle did add Franklin Park has challenges, too, including flood control. The Des Plaines River abuts the community's eastern border.

"That's not unique to Franklin Park. There's a lot of communities dealing with that threat," Carlisle said April 21. "They are definitely on board, first and foremost, with educating their community on what things they can do."

Indeed, flood mitigation is mentioned several times in the document and includes recommendations for more green infrastructure and public outreach and education initiatives.

Carlisle said he does not expect the document to change significantly before it heads to village's board of trustees for final approval later this year.

Still Schneider and Carlisle both encouraged residents to attend the April 27 meeting,

"People are seeing there's a lot of exciting and new things happening in Franklin Park," Schneider said. "This is a road map for the kind of things the village is looking at doing. They can learn what's taking place, what's going on in their town. They can offer recommendations."

*Thomas Vogel is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.*